



WARREN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Box 256, Indianola, IA 50125

Phone -515-961-8085

(Highway 92 West, 1300 West 2nd Ave. Turn north into fair grounds, then turn east)

E-mail - contact@warrencountyhistory.org

March 2025

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SOUPS ON!



JOIN US Tuesday, March 24 at 6:00 pm for Soup Supper and WCHS Annual Meeting

2nd Thursday of Month

- 9:30 Board Meeting
- 10:00 LCF Meeting

Tuesday, April 28, 7:00 pm

General Meeting

Speaker: Kent Halstead - TB

Pioneer School

May 14, 15, 18, 19

Garage Sale

June 19th & 20th

WCHS OFFICER NOMINEES for MARCH ANNUAL MEETING Tuesday, March 24th. (6:00 pm SOUP SUPPER, followed by ANNUAL MEETING)

Proposed Slate of Officers:

President-Jerry Beatty

1st Vice President-Doug Harding

2nd Vice President-Juanita Ott

Treasurer-Judy Richards

Trustees: Don Sandy, Mary McCormick,

Susan Graser, and Dan Porter

Nomination Committee: Toni Rath,

Don Sandy and Linda Beatty

Qualified Charitable Distribution



Here is a tax-smart way for traditional IRA owners, age 70 1/2 or older to give to WCHS. Make a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) and pay no tax on the gift. For 2024 you can transfer your QCD gift directly to Warren County Historical Society.

Please continue to collect Indianola HyVee receipts and bring them in to the museum. We have a large glass container near the kitchen where you can place them. We can use gas, pharmacy, grocery or any other HyVee receipt. It is an easy way to raise funds for WCHS. When HyVee asks if you want to have your receipt, say YES!



WARREN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SUMMER HUGE, Multi GARAGE SALE

FRIDAY JUNE 19th, 3:00 to 7:00

SATURDAY June 20th, 9:00 to 2:00

Highway 92 west, turn into warren County Fairgrounds on north and then turn right to WCHS

We are accepting donations June 1st at the WCHS Museum on Thursdays 9:00 to 4:00 or Saturdays 9:00 to noon through Thursday

June 19th.

Want to help sort and price, work at sale or have questions? Contact Linda Beatty at 961-3088 or stop by WCHS on Thursdays, 9 to 4 or Saturday 9 to noon.



As you spring clean in March and April, consider sharing your excess items/clutter with WCHS for our annual garage sale.

From the President

Hello!

Spring is right around the corner! The birds are returning and the flowers are starting to emerge. Gardeners and farmers are anxious to begin planting.

Before you know it, Pioneer School (May 14,15,18 and 19) will be here; then school will be out! Please remember that we are open on Thursdays from 9-4 and Saturdays 9- noon. Come visit the museum, village, and model railroad exhibit. The “Kitty Picken Memorial Research Library” is a great place to discover new things, and we also have hard copies of Warren County newspapers which are fun to explore.



Deb Larrison

Our yard sale is June 19th and 20th. Our next big project is to repair and update the George Washington Carver Museum. It has not been repainted since it opened. Look for the kick off of the “George Washington Carver” fund raising plans coming soon. Don’t forget the 2026 Log Cabin Festival on September 26th !! We will be celebrating Warren County’s early settlers for the USA 250th, Iowa’s 180th and 50th anniversary of the groundbreaking of our WCHS Museum.

Please come to the WCHS Annual Meeting: Tuesday, March 24 th , at 6:00 p.m. Break some bread, learn what’s new, and elect your new officers for the this year.

Remember, we are always looking for volunteers to help with preserving our past and caring for the wonderful collection we have.

Thank you so much for everything you do and we hope you will continue your support of this wonderful place full of history and a wealth of information: a place that has been years and generations in the making.

Sincerely,

Deb Larrison, President

HOUSE SWITCHES LOCATION FROM ONE ROAD SIDE TO THE OTHER

November 1969 the large gray house owned by the Laverty family was moved from the west side of Hiway 65/69 to the east side, prior to it becoming a four lane highway. Photo from David Godwin



VISION | our future

Building on our legacy of preserving county history, WCHS aims to become a vibrant center for discovery and community—where people of all ages, places, and interest levels are invited to connect in the present, explore the past, and shape the future.

PURPOSE | why we exist

WCHS exists to collect, preserve, and create interest in the cultural, political, and economic heritage of Warren County and its place in Iowa and U.S. history.

MISSION | what we do

We maintain a history museum, research library, and heritage village—home to a rich collection of artifacts, stories, and buildings. These assets are shared with our community through events, programs, and communications.

IMPACT | our contribution

History isn't just about the past—it's a tool for understanding today and shaping what comes next. At WCHS, we preserve stories to equip current and future generations with the insight, identity, and connection they need to foster belonging, make informed decisions, and build a more resilient future. Investment in WCHS fuels that impact—transforming legacy into leadership.

VALUES | our approach

Our vision will unfold over time guided by shared values that inform every decision we make:

Legacy - honoring the past with care

Relevance - making history meaningful in today's world

Connection - creating space to engage and contribute

Impact - advancing our mission with intention

Resilience - adapting to circumstances

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1 Boost Our Capabilities

Establish strong alignment, financial maturity, and a modern membership model.

2 Connect More People with Local History

Strengthen county identity, spark interest, and cultivate social connection.

3 Elevate WCHS as a Community Pillar

Increase visibility, expand outreach, and build partnerships to anchor WCHS as a key contributor.

4 Create a Destination

Develop an experiential mast plan to improve the visitor journey across all touchpoints.

LOG CABIN FESTIVAL

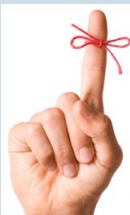
BEFORE 1870

Honoring Old Settlers, Farmers & Communities

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2026
Parade 10:00 Heritage Village II to 4



- * Heritage Village Tours
- + Pioneer Farming Demonstrations
- + Stories & Artifacts
- + Community Heritage Exhibits
- + Music & Dance
- Old Settlers Celebration



*Don't
Forget!*

Tuesday, March 24th WCHS 6:00 pm Soup Supper & Annual Meeting!

PROPOSED BYLAW CHANGE

Article VI Executive Board

Sec. 6.1 The Executive Board shall consist of all elected officers and a member of the Building Trustees. **Insert: The Executive Board shall consist of all elected officers, the immediate past president and a member of the building trustees.**

GENERAL STORE



SOUTH RIVER FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE



GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER BUILDING



WARREN COUNTY MEMBERSHIP & SUPPORT

WCHS is a free admission, privately funded nonprofit that relies on the generosity of its friends and supporters. We are all volunteers and have no paid staff. Please help us preserve this legacy through your membership. You will be contributing to the cultural and historic quality of life in Indianola and Warren County, Iowa.

BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!

YOUR MEMBERSHIP PROVIDES:

- *Invitations to events.
- *Emails to keep you informed.
- *Four copies of the WCHS Newsletter
- *Rental of our facilities. (Members only rental)
- *Voting privileges at Society's Meetings.

JOIN or RENEW YOUR WCHS MEMBERSHIP

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CELLPHONE _____ LANDLINE _____

E-MAIL _____

Single \$25

Family \$40

Sustaining \$100

Benefactor \$250

Visionary \$500

WCHS is a nonprofit 501(c)(3)



Tuesday, April 28th at 7:00pm Kent Halstead will present the program at our WCHS General Meeting. TB (Also known as The White Plague, Consumption (1880s) and Tuberculosis) Come with your questions and you know Kent will have the historical answers.

**Attendees at 1st Association of Early Settlers of Warren County Meeting
(In Indianola Iowa in September 1883)**

1846

Dowell, J.W.
Dowell, Martha
Dotson, Elinor
Dotson, Uriah
Hartman, E.W.
Laverty, Jas

1847

Bishop, Lucy
Bishop, J.J.
Foust, E.M.
Henderson. P.P.
Myrick, Eli

1848

Henderson, J.H.
Laverty, J.W.

1849

Anderson, Clara
Baysinger, Elias
Freel, Louisa
Moore, Margaret A.
Moore, Sam
Liston, Rebecca
Watts, John

1850

Applegate, A.J.
Ash, J.O
Bishop, A.C.
McClintic, L.D.
Peck, LydiaShoemaker, A.B.
Shoemaker, Sophrona
Stitt, T.R.
Todhunter, Lewis

1851

Corzatt, N.
Dye, E.D.
Dye, Rebecca
Lewis, J.E.
Lewis, Nancy E.
Peck, Geo
Watts, Wm

1852

Ash, A
Ash, Sarah
Ash, M.
Ash, Sarah
Brazelton, R.C.
Duncan, A.J.
Duncan, Louisa
Hastie, A.
Park, A.
Park, A.R.

Wadsworth, Mary B.
Welch, C.M.
Welch, J.E.
Williamson, J.E.
Wood, John
Wood, Mary

1853

Bibo, W.B.
Corbitt, J.T.
Dashiell, Louisanna
Dashiell, M.A.
Davis, M.R.
Hanby, J.
Headrick, Hannah
McCormick, E.
McCormick, Margaret E.
McKee, Edd R.
Main, A.B.
Main, Mary Ann
Peck, Isaac
Spencer, C.C.
Surber, Margaret
Surber, I.S.
Williamson, Sarah J.

1854

Anderson, E.K
Cofman, Wm
Cowie, M.
Crow, Jno
Dowell, E.B.
Henderson, Nannie
Igo, Mary
Lacy, Emily
Iago, Mary
Lacy, Emily
Lacy, J.T.
Meek, J.T.
Sherman, J.W
Sherman, Julia A.
Wadsworth, B.F.
Wayman, Elizabeth
Wayman, H.
Wayman, J.F.
Yarnell, Samuel
Spencer, L.S.

1855

Bringham, Aaron
Bryant, E.W.
Bryant, Mary
Gilman, M
Hewitt, S.M.
Igo, Lewis

Meek, J.
Park, Elizabeth
Patton, Louisa J.
Perry, E.W
Scott, S.
Snyder, J.
Stitt, Melvin.

1856

Allen, C.K.
Bundy, J.W.
Cook, Jas
Graham, Madison
Graham, Mary Ann
Igo, Mary Ann
Jackson, Kate
Jackson, M.D.
Jury, E.
Jury, S.
McKee, Emma, B.
Millon, J.H.
Patton, Clarissa
Patton, T.D.
Rodgers, F.
Patten, John
Steele, Wm
Williamson, R.W.
Wright, Ellen M.

1857

Clarke, Ellen P.
Clarke, J. Chapelle
Hendrick, Thos J.
Laverty, Jennie
Wright, I.O.

1859

Handly, Esther
Handly, J

In September 1883 the above group of early settlers from Warren County, Iowa met to form the Association of Early Settlers of Warren County. Anyone who had lived in the county 20 years could join. The following were elected officers: P.P. Henderson, President; James Laverty, John Wood and M.A Dashiell Vice Presidents; Jno. J. Henderson, Secretary; James Laverty, Treasurer; and Newton Guthrie, James Laverty, and P.P. Henderson, Historians. They had all attendees of this meeting sign in and write their birthdate and when they came to Warren County, Iowa. The Kitty Picken Memorial Library has this information.

Here are the preamble and bylaws for the Association of Early Settlers of Warren County that they created at the first meeting.

Whereas, *The repeated providences which have called away some of our first settlers of Warren County, admonish us that the whole number will soon be gone, and,*

Whereas, *The most interesting and important items of early settlers' history are recorded only in the memories of the early settlers, and unless gathered and written, soon will be lost forever:*

Therefore Resolved, *That we the early settlers now present do form a Brotherhood of Pioneers of Warren County, and in furtherance of this project now adopt the following constitution and bylaws:*

Article 1. *This society shall be called the Association of Early Settlers of Warren County.*

Article 2. *The officers shall be a president, three vice presidents, secretary and treasurer.*

Article 3.

Section 1. *The president shall preside at all meetings of the association when deemed necessary for the good of the society.*

Section 2. *The senior vice president shall preside in the absence of the president.*

Section 3. *The secretary shall keep a record of the proceedings of the association at their annual meetings and shall keep a book called the "Early Settlers Register". He shall receive communications and correspond with similar associations in other counties.*

Section 4. *The treasurer shall keep an account of the funds of the society and pay them out on the order of the president.*

Section 5. *The officers shall be elected at the annual meetings of the associations.*

Section 6. *All persons who have been residents of Warren County twenty years, together with their wives, widows and children of early settlers shall be eligible to membership and may sign the register and be entitled to vote at their annual election.*

Section 7. *It shall be the duty of each member to report to the secretary, removals of members from the county, deaths of members when known to them and assist the secretary in gathering up incidents and reminiscences connected with the early settlement of the county, who shall keep such reports on file in his office.*

Section 8. *The secretary shall so arrange the Register to record, the name, date of birth, place of nativity, date of immigration to the state and county, with a column for removals from the county, deaths and such other items of interest to the society.*

Article 9. *It shall be the duty of members in token of this society to attend the funeral of deceased members in token of respect.*

Bylaws: Section 1. *Ten members shall constitute a quorum to do business, but a less number may meet and adjourn.*

Eventually, through subscription they purchased about 3 ½ acres of land next to the Middle River in Summerset, where they could hold annual all day picnic gatherings. At the picnics speeches were given, bands played music, early settler stories were shared and delicious food was consumed. Sometimes they had over 2,000 people at the picnics. The annual meetings ended in 1933 and continued sporadically till the late 1940s and early 50s. In 1971 it was resurrected for a short time. Then, they folded and the Summerset land was given to Warren County Historical Society. The Summerset property was unused and overgrown and sold by the WCHS.



James & Mary Coles

JAMES C. COLES, WARREN COUNTY EARLY SETTLER and UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

James C. Coles was born November 28, 1905 in Berks County, Pennsylvania to Solomon and Elizabeth McCord Colles. The family moved to Belmont County, Ohio in 1807 and James married Mary Pearson January 6, 1831 in Ohio. They moved to land in Section 30 on Otter Creek in Liberty Township, Warren County, Iowa in the fall of 1852. He had purchased 120 acres of land. He and Samuel James opened a steam saw mill near Lawrenceburg. The area was rich in timberland. Later burrs were added to grind corn.

James helped to organize and name the township and voted in the first election. The township was named Liberty because most of the early settlers were abolitionists.

James Coles was known to be very much opposed to the fugitive slave law and assisted slaves to reach the Des Moines River in Warren County and continue their travels to Canada. He was a station Master on the Underground Railroad. His wife, Mary had been of the Quaker faith, but was disowned for marriage contrary to the Friends Meeting discipline, because James Coles was not a Quaker. Mary Pearson Coles' father (Benjamin of OH) and brother (William of Warren County, IA) were involved in the underground railroad.

Benjamin went to mine gold in California from 1849 to 1851. He sold his mining tools and had acquired about \$7,000. He went back to Ohio and in 1852 purchased quite a bit of land in Warren County, Iowa. Benjamin came to Liberty, Warren County, Iowa in 1855 with his wife, children and parents. He built a two story house with a cellar. *The Herald* article says, "The report was circulated that the cellar of Benjamin Coles was full of guns in case there was an expected raid of the Knights to be repulsed." Benjamin's house was later found to contain a hidden room believed to be a hiding place for underground railroad and freedom seeker use. His home was located in Section 10, Liberty Township, Warren County, Iowa.

The area around Christian Neck was nicknamed Fort Gimlet because people were radical abolitionists and assisted runaway slaves seeking help. To the north of this settlement were Unionists called "Lincoln Hirelings" and to the south were people called "Copperheads".

Mary and James had the following children: William B., Levi, Jesse, Lydia, Benjamin, Barton, Elizabeth, Phebe Ann, Aaron and Thomas.

James died May 27, 1885 at Madora (Medora), Warren County, Iowa and is buried at Christian Neck Cemetery. He had been a miller and farmer.



1850s Map of Liberty Township. Top red star locates the Coles' brothers mill near Lawrenceburg and 2nd red star shows James Coles home on Otter Creek. Benjamin's home was northeast of James' home.

